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## On the Hill



### Hearings Continue on School Nutrition and Meal Programs

On March 23, the House Education and Labor Committee continued its series of hearings on H.R. 24, a bill to reauthorize certain child nutrition programs and WIC. Assistant Secretary John W. Bode testified for the Administration. Highlights of Bode's testimony included the following:

--The Bush Administration's proposal for the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child Care Food Program, and School Food Service Program is to support these programs at levels substantially higher than their 1989 funding. The Bush budget would not reduce funding levels for the Child Nutrition Programs.

--The Administration supports reauthorization of these programs, as well as the Nutrition Education and Training Program.

(Hearings Continued on Page 4)

### ASFSA Holds Last Annual Meeting With Bode and Honors "Just Say No" Contest Winners

Assistant Secretary John W. Bode wound up his valedictory address to the annual meeting of the American School Food Service Association (ASFSA) Legislative Action Conference on February 27 with an awards ceremony honoring national winners of the "Just Say No" to drugs poster and essay contest.

Top honors in the contests jointly sponsored by USDA and ASFSA went to Angela Booth for her essay and to Brady Richman for his poster. Angela, a fifth grader at Red Oak Elementary School in Moore, Oklahoma, and Brady, a senior at Buford City High School in Buford, Georgia, and their families and friends had lunch with Bode before the afternoon session of the conference.



Angela said that working on the essay had made her more aware of the dangers of drug use. "I'm frightened that people will try to force drugs on me," she said.

### Bode Announces Departure From USDA

On March 27, Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services John W. Bode announced April 11 as his last day at USDA. He will be a partner in the Washington, D.C. firm of Olsson, Frank, and Weeda.

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Brady, whose poster featured a "dead end" sign, said he added a skull and beer cans to "make his message vivid." "Even in a small town like Buford, drugs are a problem with the wrong crowd," Brady said. "And alcohol can be a problem with any crowd."

After Bode, as keynote speaker, had provided the traditional update on National School Lunch Program issues and answered questions from the audience, ASFSA President Shirley Watkins thanked all of the participants in the "Just Say No" contests.

These included thousands of students who submitted essays and posters; ASFSA affiliates in 35 states, local school food service directors, and educators. Schwan's Food Service Division, which owns Tony's Pizza, provided airfare,

lodging, and meals for the contest winners.

Watkins said the contest was one way in which ASFSA has accepted the challenge to become more involved in children's issues other than nutrition. "The issue of drugs is one of the most critical for children," she said.

Bode presented certificates of appreciation to both first place winners. Certificates were mailed to second-place winners Courtney Torrisi of Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, and Rae Moseley of Corpus Christi, Texas. Courtney won second place in the poster contest and Rae won runner-up honors in the essay contest.

-Story by Wini Scheffler  
Photo by Pam Faith  
Public Information Staff

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## Naomi Churchill Speaks to FNS on Black History Month

Naomi Churchill, director of USDA's Office of Advocacy and Enterprise, recently visited FNS to talk about Black History Month and minority opportunities within USDA.



Addressing a standing-room-only crowd of FNS employees, Churchill said, "Our black history is the evidence and guarantor that black people are survivors. It is evidence that we have come through a challenging time--and we can move against odds even when others say it's not possible."

Reflecting on USDA's history concerning minority rights and equal opportunity, Churchill said that the Department presents a picture that can best be described as "the good, the bad, and the ugly."

USDA is at its best, said Churchill, as a supporter of new technology and research, but she added, "Old cultures and their prejudices still linger in places within USDA."

"The time of overt racism is over," she said, "but the type of racism we do still see is subtle....It's the daily insults and insensitivities, the

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different treatment...the lack of training, travel, the lack of positive supervision."

USDA needs to keep working at providing employment and training opportunities for minorities, Churchill said.

Progress in hiring minorities over the past 10 years has been slow, she said, pointing out that in 1977, 7.7 percent of USDA employees were black while in 1988 only 8.5 percent of employees were black.

"But I don't want to be all doom and gloom," Churchill said. "I think there are real advantages for minorities here at USDA. It's an exciting time to be black, or a woman or a minority.... We have a 5-year affirmative action plan, and we will be doubling our efforts to hire and promote blacks within the USDA workforce," she promised.

"I am convinced," Churchill said, "that USDA is a place where, in the not too distant future, blacks will be very proud to work. The Bush Administration is one in which I see an attitude of openness. They are saying 'we want diversity, we want other ideas.'"

"There may be times," Churchill concluded, "when I would rather be a man--like when I wish I could drop my voice three octaves when I negotiate car repairs--but for right now, I can't think of anything I would rather be than black and female and involved."

-Story by Dianne Durant  
Photo by Levi Thompson  
Public Information Staff

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## OIC Conwell Ritch Recognized by Southland Corporation

Conwell Ritch, OIC of the El Paso Field Office, was recently presented a plaque and letter of appreciation from the Southland Corporation for his work in training Southland employees during 1988.



Over the past year, Ritch participated in food stamp compliance training sessions for 7-Eleven convenience store employees in the El Paso district each month, as well as one meeting for area store managers and division office staff. He has helped train more than 500 of the 7-Eleven employees so far.

The new employees have already received food stamp training before Ritch meets with them. Although he covers the material again, he is very well received since the clerks consider him the real expert. He frequently runs over his allotted 1 hour because of the many questions.

Ritch says the presentations are paying off, since Southland employees are much more aware of their responsibilities and know they can turn to him and his staff for quick answers to problems. There have also been no major complaints about the 7-Eleven stores in the El Paso area during this time.

Although other convenience store companies in the El Paso area have been offered similar training, so far there have been no takers. However, the human services manager of Southland's Rio Grande Division (which includes El Paso and Albuquerque) has indicated he would also like such an arrangement for the Albuquerque area.

-Story by Blanche Jackson  
SWRO Public Affairs Staff  
Photo courtesy of Southland Corporation



## SERO Implements Lockbox Check Collection System

A money- and time-saving lockbox check collection system is in effect for SERO thanks to Treasury Department staff. The system is the first of its kind to be used by FNS, but Pat Camp, Financial Management (FM), expects other regions to explore using a lockbox system to collect receivables.

SERO's attention first focused on the concept at a Treasury-sponsored lockbox demonstration in Atlanta. The idea was attractive because it offered the prospect of an orderly system for funneling checks from state agencies, grocers, and ROAP sponsors into a single account. Funds are then transferred directly back to Treasury.

SERO enlisted the help of Treasury's Birmingham (Alabama) Financial Center, which served as liaison with Treasury.



Andy Wilson (center), deputy director of Treasury in Birmingham, Alabama, accepts a certificate of appreciation for his staff's assistance in implementing SERO's lockbox from Pat Camp (left) and Beth King.

The program has many advantages for both FNS and Treasury. Checks have a direct mail route back to Washington via First Chicago Bank, thus shortening the time required to return funds to Treasury. This time reduction allows Treasury to credit SERO's account quickly and to reduce debt service payments. Also, searches for checks inadvertently sent to individual programs are

eliminated and internal control is emphasized. In addition, the cost of implementing the operation was absorbed by Treasury.

Startup difficulties have been few, minor, and easily solved because of an efficient staff at First Chicago Bank and the availability of reconciliation documents.

To show SERO's gratitude to Treasury employees, Camp and Beth King (FM) presented a certificate of appreciation to the staff of the Birmingham Financial Center. "They went out of their way to help us," Camp said.

-Story and photo by  
SERO Public Affairs Staff

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### (Hearings Continued)

--USDA has reviewed and modified the guidelines, recipes, commodity specifications, and other materials to see that compliance with the Dietary Guidelines is as complete as possible.

--Bode explained the Federal Review Initiative to the committee--why it was needed, how it differed from AIMS, and that it would not duplicate other reviews.

--The Administration supports reauthorization of WIC and increases in funding to offset inflation.

Markup of the bill is scheduled by the committee for the week of May 1. As yet, no action has been scheduled by the Senate.

-Story by Bob Beard  
Office of Governmental Affairs

## Food Programs Participation Update

Following are preliminary estimates of participation in the Federal-State food assistance programs for the month of January with comparisons to the previous month and to the same month of last year.

	<u>Jan. 1988</u>	<u>Dec. 1988</u>	<u>Jan. 1989</u>	<u>2/</u>
<u>Food Stamp Program: 1/</u>				
People participating (mil.) .....	18.7	18.7	18.8	
Value of bonus coupons (\$ mil.) .....	932.5	974.6	970.1	
Average bonus per person .....	\$ 49.74	\$ 52.22	\$ 51.66	
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	1,033.0	1,079.0	1,074.4	
<u>National School Lunch Program:</u>				
Number of schools participating (thous.) .....	89.8	NA	NA	
Children participating (mil.) .....	24.2	24.6	24.2	
Children reached with free or reduced price lunches (mil.) .....	11.4	11.5	11.3	
Percentage of lunches served free .....	40.4	39.9	39.3	
Percentage of lunches served at reduced price .....	6.7	6.8	6.7	
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	335.3	302.1	362.7	
<u>School Breakfast Program:</u>				
Number of schools participating (thous.) .....	38.7	NA	NA	
Children participating (mil.) .....	3.5	3.8	3.8	
Percentage of breakfasts served free or at reduced price .....	87.8	86.7	86.7	
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	43.7	41.1	50.6	
<u>Child Care Food Program:</u>				
Number of meals served in centers (mil.) .....	34.4	34.6	34.5	
Number of meals served in homes (mil.) .....	27.1	29.9	28.4	
Percentage of all meals served free .....	78.4	78.8	78.4	
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	47.2	51.4	50.5	
<u>Special Supplemental Food Program (WIC):</u>				
People participating (mil.) .....	3.5	3.9	4.0	
Food cost (\$ mil.) .....	116.3	126.7	128.5	
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	145.8	160.2	159.1	
<u>Commodity Supplemental Food Program: 3/</u>				
People participating (thous.) .....	212.8	215.6	225.6	
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	3.4	4.2	4.0	
<u>Food Distribution to Indians and Needy Families:</u>				
Number of projects in operation .....	107	108	108	
People participating (thous.) .....	141.1	137.3	143.0	
Total program cost (\$ mil.) .....	4.4	4.7	5.0	
<u>Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program:</u>				
Total USDA cost (\$ mil.) .....	60.1	12.7	10.7	

1/ Puerto Rico has been excluded from all months.

2/ Data collected as of March 23, 1989.

3/ Includes data for all elderly participants.



## Friday Letter Vacancy Listing by Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
o Investigator	(A)	GS-1810	5/7/9	04-10-89	89-83	*BRD
o Investigator	(A)	GS-1810	5/7/9	04-10-89	89-84	**BRD
o Management Analyst	(FNS-HQ)	GS-343	11	04-03-89	89-86	IRMD
o Personnel Mgmt. Specialist	(A)	GS-201	11/12	04/10/89	89-87	PED
o Labor Mgmt. Spec.	(G)	GM-233	13	04/10/89	89-88	PED
o Secretary Steno	(G)	GS-318	7	04/10/89	89-89	ORO
o Food Program Spec.	(A)	GS-120	11/12	04/10/89	89-90	CND
o Supvry Operating Accountant	(FNS-N)	GM-510	13	04/10/89	89-91	ACD
o Food Program Spec.	(FNS-N)	GS-170	12	04/10/89	89-92	PAD
o Program Analyst	(FNS-N)	GS-345	12/13	04/11/89	89-93	ORO
o Food Program Spec.	(FNS-HQ)	GS-120	11/12	04/10/89	89-94	CND
o Food Program Spec.	(FNS-HQ)	GS-120	5/11	04/10/89	89-95	CND
o Secretary	(FNS-HQ)	GS-318	5/6	04/10/89	89-96	CND
o Secretary Typing	(G)	GS-318	5/6	04/24/89	89-97	PED
o Personnel Mgmt. Specialist	(G)	GS-201	7/9	04/24/89	89-98	PED
o Nutritionist	(A)	GS-630	12/13	05/08/89	89-H-99	HNIS
o Survy Home Economist	(HNIS)	GS-493	14	04/17/89	89-H-100	HNIS

### Office Location

PED - Personnel Division  
 ORO - Office of Regional Operations  
 HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service  
 IRMD - Information Resources Management Division  
 CND - Child Nutrition Division  
 ACD - Accounting Division  
 BRD - Benefit Redemption Division  
 PAD - Program Accountability Division

### Area of Consideration

(A) - All Sources  
 (G) - Governmentwide  
 (HNIS) - Human Nutrition Information Service  
 (FNS-HQ) - Food and Nutrition Service (Headquarters)  
 (FNS-N) - Food and Nutrition Service (Nationwide)  
 \* Columbus, Ohio  
 \*\* St. Louis, MO

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## Natalie McCarthy Recuperates From Heart Surgery

Natalie McCarthy, our nurse at POC, had major heart surgery on March 16. She is expected to remain in the hospital until March 31. It is requested that no calls or visits be made for now.

Get well cards may be sent to the Fairfax Hospital, 3300 Gallows Road, Room 356, Falls Church, Virginia 22042, or to her home at 4822 Old Dominion Drive, Arlington, Virginia 22207.